

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10
IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07 OES-07
SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-11 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05
H-02 PA-02 USIA-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DOEE-00 SSO-00
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P 021943Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3667

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 02294

E.O. 11652: N.A.
TAGS: PINS, TECH, SP
SUBJECT: PROTESTS AGAINST NUCLEAR PLANT NEAR BILBAO
INCREASE IN VIOLENCE: SERIES OF BOMBS DETONATED MARCH 1

REF: STATE 53164; 77 MADRID 10537; MADRID 0086

1. SUMMARY: ONE OF A BASQUE REGION-WIDE SERIES OF BOMB BLASTS EARLY MARCH 1 DESTROYED THE IBERDUERO, S.A., OFFICES IN A BILBAO SUBURB WHERE 15 AMERICAN ENGINEERS WITH BECHTEL CORPORATION HAD BEEN WORKING ON A NUCLEAR PROJECT. NO ONE WAS INJURED. THESE EXPLOSIONS WERE BUT THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF INCREASINGLY VIOLENT ACTS WHICH HAVE CHARACTERIZED AN EXTENDED CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONSTRUCTION OF THE NUCLEAR PLANT AT LEMONIZ, NEAR BILBAO. OVER THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN, THERE HAVE BEEN OVER 100 DEMONSTRATIONS, 20 ASSAULTS ON IBERDUERO OFFICES IN VARIOUS BASQUE CITIES, AND ONE FATALITY, AN ETA TERRORIST KILLED IN AN ASSAULT ON THE CIVIL GUARD OUTPOST AT THE LEMONIZ SITE LATE LAST YEAR. THUS FAR NEITHER U.S. PERSONNEL NOR U.S. INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN THE TARGET OF ANTI-NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES.

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END SUMMARY.

2. AMCONSUL BILBAO HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING REPORT ON THE MARCH 1 BOMB BLASTS, TOGETHER WITH AN UPDATE OF THE CONTINUING ANTI-NUCLEAR CAMPAIGN OF WHICH THEY ARE A PART:

3. ABOUT MIDNIGHT ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 1, BOMBS WERE SET OFF SIMULTANEOUSLY AT INSTALLATIONS OF THE IBERDUERO ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE BASQUE PROVINCES, CAUSING DAMAGE ESTIMATED AT OVER 20 MILLION PESETAS (ABOUT US\$250,000). DESTRUCTION WAS ALMOST TOTAL AT THE WAREHOUSE OF A BILBAO SUBURBAN POWER STATION AND AT IBERDUERO OFFICES LOCATED IN THE BILBAO SUBURB OF LAS ARENAS, VITORIA (ALAVA), AND DEVA (GUIPUZCOA). MINOR DAMAGE WAS DONE TO A WAREHOUSE IN PAMPLONA AND TO IBERDUERO OFFICES IN SAN SEBASTIAN, AZPEITIA AND ZARAUZ (GUIPUZCOA), AND IN AMURRIO (ALAVA). SEVERAL OTHER BOMBS FAILED TO GO OFF.

4. AT THE DESTROYED LAS ARENAS OFFICES, OVER 90 EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING 15 AMERICAN ENGINEERS EMPLOYED BY BECHTEL, HAD BEEN WORKING ON A NUCLEAR PROJECT WHICH IS TO BE LOCATED AT SAYAGO, NEAR ZAMORA. ONE OF THE ENGINEERS TOLD AMCONSUL BILBAO THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE ABOUT NINE MONTHS FOR THE PRE-SENT STAFF TO REDO THE CALCULATIONS AND OTHER WORK DESTROYED BY THE BLAST AND ENSUING FIRE. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS RECEIVED ANONYMOUS CALLS IDENTIFYING THE AUTHORS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LAS ARENAS OFFICES AS THE BASQUE TERRORIST ETA. THE CALLER STATED THAT ETA ALSO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMBING IN SAN SEBASTIAN AS WELL AS OF TWO OTHER IBERDUERO INSTALLATIONS NEAR BILBAO. HE THREATENED THE QUOTE EXECUTIO UNQUOTE OF THE PRESIDENT OF IBERDUERO IF CONSTRUCTION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE LEMONIZ PLANT WAS NOT HALTED WITHIN FIFTEEN DAYS.

5. THESE ATTACKS ON IBERDUERO ARE THE LATEST IN AN INCREASINGLY VIOLENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LEMONIZ PLANT. THE PROJECT IS PARTIALLY FINANCED BY EXIMBANK, AND WESTINGHOUSE IS THE PRIMARY SUPPLIER OF EQUIPMENT. SERIOUS ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTS HAVE BEEN PICKING UP STEAM SINCE JULY 1977, WHEN MORE THAN 100,000 PEOPLE HEEDED THE CALL OF THE QUOTE COMMISSION FOR DEFENSE OF A NON-NUCLEAR BASQUE COAST UNQUOTE AND DEMONSTRATED IN BILBAO AGAINST THE LEMONIZ PROJECT. LAST DECEMBER 3, THE ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTS TURNED VIOLENT WITH THE BOMBING OF THE OFFICES OF SENER, AN ENGINEERING FIRM ALSO INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT. THIS ACT WAS ALSO CLAIMED BY ETA, WHICH HAS SEIZED UPON THE EMOTIONAL NUCLEAR THEME IN AN ATTEMPT TO RECOUP ITS RAPIDLY DIMINISHING PRESTIGE. (IN FACT THE NON-NUCLEAR DEFENSE COMMISSION HAS ISSUED STATEMENTS SUPPORTING ETA.) ETA'S ATTACK ON A CIVIL GUARD POST ADJACEN TO THE PLANT SITE ON DECEMBER 18 RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF ONE ETA MEMBER, THE ONLY FATALITY TO DATE WHICH CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE NUCLEAR PROTESTS, AND THE ROBBERY OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF GOMA-2 EXPLOSIVES BY ETA IN VIZCAYA

LAST DECEMBER FUELLED SPECULATION THAT ETA INTENDS A SPECTACULAR ASSAULT ON LEMONIZ (REFTELS). ALL OF THE SMALL EXTREME BASQUE NATIONALIST AND FAR-LEFT POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE CALLED FOR A HALT TO CONSTRUCTION OF THE LEMONIZ PLANT. THE PCE HAS COME DOWN ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE AND THE MORE INFLUENTIAL PSOE AND PNV ARE QUOTE STUDYING THE MATTER UNQUOTE.

6. THUS FAR NEITHER U.S. PERSONNEL NOR U.S. INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN A TARGET OF ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTESTS DESPITE OCCASIONAL REFERENCE TO QUOTE U.S. NUCLEAR IMPERIALISM UNQUOTE IN A RADICAL BASQUE MAGAZINE BASED IN PAMPLONA WHICH HAS BEEN RUNNING A SERIES OF CRITICAL ARTICLES ON NUCLEAR ENERGY. THE POLITICAL HAS DISSEMINATED A LENGTHY NOTE UNCLASSIFIED

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WHICH TAKES CREDIT FOR THE RECENT ATTACKS ON IBERDUERO, EXPLAINS THE REASONS THEREFORE, AND DECRIES THE QUOTE

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3668

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CENTRALIST STATE SERVING THE OLIGARCHY UNQUOTE(IBERDUERO). BUT IT MAKES NO MENTION OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT.

7. IBERDUERO HAS BEGUN A BELATED PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN, INVOLVING PUBLIC MEETINGS AND NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS, TO COMBAT THE PROLIFERATION OF QUOTE ANTI-NUCLEAR

COMMITTEES UNQUOTE AND THE INCREASING TEMPO OF THE ANTI-NUCLEAR CAMPAIGN GENERALLY. IT HAS, HOWEVER, YIELDED LITTLE IN THE WAY OF POSITIVE RESULTS TO DATE, AND THE FACT THAT THE EXTREMIST BASQUE PARTIES HAVE RAISED THE ANTI-NUCLEAR BANNER PROMISES CONTINUING PROBLEMS AND, ALMOST CERTAINLY, PERIODIC VIOLENCE. STABLER

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